

POLLING SHOWS VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT OUT OF TOUCH WITH COMMUNITY VALUES

28 OCTOBER 2021

The *Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill 2021* introduced to Parliament today by the Victorian Government will make it increasingly difficult for Christian schools to employ staff who share the beliefs of the school and practice the Christian faith.

Recent private polling* demonstrates widespread support for the current employment practices of Christian schools with **78% of Victorians supporting the right of religious schools to employ teachers and other staff who support the values and beliefs of the school**, if those values and beliefs are clearly stated. This support was across the political spectrum –

Support the right of religious schools to choose staff	Labor	Liberal	Nationals	Greens
Yes	77%	89%	92%	56%
No	23%	11%	8%	44%

“This polling shows that Australians understand that in a tolerant, multi-faith society, schools should be allowed the freedom to teach their values and beliefs regardless of whether they are Jewish, Muslim, Catholic or Christian schools,” said Mark Spencer of Christian Schools Australia.

“Parents who choose to enrol their children in our schools want an education based on Christian values, which the state school system can no longer provide, and this Bill is trying to squeeze faith out of our schools too,” said Vanessa Cheng of the Australian Association of Christian Schools, “once again the Victorian Government has shown it is completely out of touch with faith communities and does not understand of how our schools operate in practice.”

The Australian Association of Christian schools and Christian Schools Australia call upon the Victorian Government to listen to the concerns of our community and not interfere with the ability of schools to continue employing staff who live out the values of the school and can teach students the Christian faith in all areas of life.

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* Independent polling of a weighted representative sample of 747 Victorians undertaken from 19 October 2021.